

On the basis of Article 75 of the Electoral Code (Fair copy), published in the “Official Gazette of RM” 54/2011, the Broadcasting Council, at the second continuation of the 9<sup>th</sup> session, held on April 21, 2011, adopted

## **RULEBOOK FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE BROADCASTERS IN THE PERIOD BEFORE THE START OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

### **I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### Article 1

This Rulebook stipulates the contents which are considered electoral media presentation and which are not allowed in the period before the commencement of the election campaign as well as the manner of conduct of the broadcasters since the day of calling of the elections until the day set for the commencement of the election campaign.

#### **Glossary**

#### Article 2

Certain terms in this Rulebook have the following meaning:

1. **Electoral media presentation** is promotion (indirect or direct) of opinions, programs, platforms, achievements, activities and the like of the political parties, coalitions, groups of voters and their representatives.
2. **Daily informative programs** are all radio and television news programs.
3. **Specialized informative programs** are informative-political programs the genre of which are interviews, debates or TV/radio face-to-face duels, current-affairs programs and topic-specialized informative programs.

#### Article 3

The broadcasters are independent and responsible in the creation of the programs and the editorial policy.

#### Article 4

The broadcasters before the start of the election campaign cannot air electoral media presentation.

Since the day of calling of the elections until the commencement of the election campaign all the information related to the preparation of the elections, i.e. the election activities before the commencement of the election campaign of the political parties, coalitions, groups of voters and their representatives can be aired only in the daily-informative programs.

#### Article 5

Editors, journalists, program hosts and presenters engaged in preparation of broadcasters' programs must not take part in pre-election activities of political parties, coalitions, groups of voters and their representatives, directed at promotion of opinions, programs, platforms, achievements, activities and other.

Should they decide to take part in such activities their engagement in the broadcasters' programs must be put to rest since the day of calling of the elections until the completion of the elections.

#### Article 6

The broadcasters are obliged to record the output signal of their program since the day of calling of the elections until the end of the election campaign and the footage of the entire program must be retained for at least 30 days after the completion of the elections.

Upon request from the Broadcasting Council the broadcasters are obliged latest within 48 hours upon receipt of the request to make available to the Broadcasting Council the footage of the requested program, as well as other documents, data and information listed in the request.

#### Article 7

The broadcasters are not allowed to air announcements and advertisements of the state bodies, municipal bodies and the City of Skopje, financed by the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia, the municipal budgets and the Budget of the City of Skopje since the day of calling of the elections until their completion.

## **II MANNER OF REPORTING**

### **Daily-informative programs**

#### Article 8

When informing about the elections preparations, i.e. the electoral activities that take place before the start of the election campaign in the daily-informative programs the broadcasters must provide:

- political pluralism, i.e. information for political parties, coalitions and groups of voters;
- openness for different political opinions and views;
- objective and impartial presentation of the activities of the political parties, coalitions, groups of voters and their representatives or of other subjects with equal treatment of their views and opinions in order to enable free formation of the opinion of the public;
- guarantee the right to reply and correction.

#### Article 9

The broadcasters need to respect the following principles:

- nurture and development of human and moral values of the people and protection of privacy and dignity of the person;
- equality of freedoms and rights regardless to the gender, race, national, ethnic and social origin, political and religious beliefs, economic and social position and other status of the individual and the citizen;
- promotion of the spirit of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding between the individuals of different ethnic and cultural origin and respect of the dignity and the rights of the members of the marginalized communities; and
- promotion of international understanding and cooperation, public notion for fairness and defense of democratic freedoms.

#### Article 10

When reporting about the activities related to the elections, and taking into consideration the specifics of the activities of the political subjects engaged in it, the broadcasters should pay special attention to the fact that they are not allowed to air contents aimed at violent overthrow of the constitutional order of the Republic of Macedonia, or encourage or invite to military aggression or incite national, racial, gender or religious hatred and intolerance.

If situations stated in paragraph 1 of this Article appear, the broadcasters can realize their right to inform the public by refraining from those contents, i.e. shall provide additional factual and critical context thus decreasing the negative connotation or accusations contained in it.

#### Article 11

The comments regarding the preparations for elections, i.e. the election activities happening before the commencement of the election campaign, aired in the daily-informative programs should be distinguishable as separate items and be marked either with the name of the author or as editorial comment.

#### Article 12

Reporting on the regular activities of the state bodies, the municipal bodies and the city of Skopje, the state institutions and organizations, as well as the activities of legal and other entities authorized to perform public activities by law, in the programs of the broadcasters, in the period since the day of calling of the elections until the day set for start of the election campaign, must not be in function of electoral media presentation of any political subject.

#### Article 13

When reporting the results from a public opinion poll, the broadcasters are obliged to ensure sufficient information based on which the public can assess the trustworthiness of the survey:

- to indicate the name of the person ordering and paying the survey,
- to indicate the institution conducting the research,
- to indicate the methodology applied,

- to point out indicators for the size and structure of the poll sample,
- to indicate the date/the period when the survey was conducted.

The broadcasters should not publish results from unscientific and unrepresentative researches of the public opinion, such as: voting of viewers or listeners through telephone (televoting), surveys conducted through Internet, and similar.

### **Specialized informative programs**

#### Article 14

The broadcasters can treat the elections as a topic in special informative programs too. In the special informative programs which include discussions or statements of interlocutors, as well as in the programs realized in form of debates with representatives of political parties, coalitions, groups of voters, the broadcasters should enable equitable representation of the political subjects of the ruling and the opposition parties.

Candidates confirmed by the competent electoral bodies must not take part in the specialized informative programs.

### **Paid Political Advertising**

#### Article 15

The broadcasters are not allowed to air paid political advertising since the day of calling of the elections until the day set for start of the election campaign. Exception from the paragraph 1 of this Article are the releases and the announcements for collecting signatures to support nominations of independent candidates.

#### Article 16

The releases and announcements of Article 15, paragraph 2 of this Rulebook should be aired only inside marked advertising blocs within the allowed time for advertising for one clock hour of aired program (total of 12 minutes) and the orderer must be clearly marked.

These releases and announcements should contain only basic data – for whom the signatures are collected, at which places the citizens can sign the nomination and when. They must not contain additional qualifications of the candidates and should not be accompanied with footages or photographs of the candidates.

#### Article 17

The campaigns of the State Election Commission and the NGOs for voter education directed at realization of the right to vote and for fair and democratic elections are not considered paid political advertising. They should be separated from the rest of the program and their orderer must be clearly marked.

#### Article 18

The broadcasters are obliged to establish pricelists for paid political advertising during the election campaign within 5 days from the day of calling of the elections. Until the start of the election campaign the broadcaster must at least twice publish the pricelists stipulated in paragraph 1 of this article on their programs. Pricelists must not be changed from the moment they have been adopted until the end of the campaign.

The broadcasters are obliged to submit the pricelists to the State Election Commission, the State Audit Office and the Broadcasting Council before the beginning of the election campaign.

#### Article 19

Amendments and supplements to this Rulebook should be made in a written form.

#### Article 20

This Rulebook enters into force the next day after its publication in the “Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia”.

Broadcasting Council  
of the Republic of Macedonia

President

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